DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 239 PS 017 844

AUTHOR McCormick, William; And Others
TITLE Delaware's Report on Early Childhood Education 1987: Findings and Recommendations of the Governor's Early Childhood Education Study Committee.
INSTITUTION Delaware State Dept. of Public Instruction, Dover.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 39p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Government Role; Individual Development; *Individual Needs; Infants; *Kindergarten; *Pilot Projects; Preschool Children; *Preschool Curriculum; *Preschool Education; Program Costs; Program Implementation; *School Entrance Age; State Programs; Toddlers
IDENTIFIERS *Delaware

ABSTRACT

Reported are findings and recommendations of Delaware's 1986 Governor's Early Childhood Education Study Committee. Most of the committee's work was carried out by five focus groups, each of which investigated one of these topics: (1) the first 60 months of life; (2) child care; (3) 4-year-old pilot programs; (4) a curriculum for 4-year-olds; and (5) admission age for kindergarten. The focus on the first 60 months involved three basic components: education, health, and community and public awareness. Particular attention was given to means of developing parent involvement in early education programs. The focus on child care involved ways of building rewards into caregiver training programs and mandating minimal training requirements for caregivers. The group focusing on 4-year-old programs provided a preliminary program description and set of recommendations. The group that concentrated on a curriculum for 4-year-olds provided recommendations based on findings that indicated that programs must: (1) be based on the current interpretation of child development research; (2) employ only professionally trained personnel; and (3) center on needs and characteristics of 4-year-olds and their families. A literature review and survey data provided the basis for recommendations on admission age for kindergarten. Concluding remarks concern the state role in implementing the recommendations. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED3042239

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

X Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

DELAWARE'S

REPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

1987

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Deleware State Dept. of Public Instruction
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Findings and Recommendations of The Governor's Early Childhood Education Study Committee

PS 017844

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DELAWARE'S
REPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
1987

Findings and Recommendations
of
The Governor's Early Childhood
Education Study Committee

PREPARED BY

William McCormick and Darlene Bolig
with
Donald Peters, Deborah Ziegler, Carol Vukelich,
Jacqueline Harling, Kathi Way and Thomas Schultz

Dover, Delaware
1987

State of Delaware
The Honorable Michael N. Castle
Governor

THE GOVERNOR'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON

William J. McCormick, Ed.D.
State Director of Professional Development and former State Supervisor of Elementary Education

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Darlene J. Bolig, Ed.D.
State Supervisor of Elementary Education

CONSULTANT

Thomas Schultz
Early Childhood Project Director,
National Association of State Boards of Education

MEMBERS

Jean Allen
President, Delaware Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.

Anita Amurao
Hospital Director, Terry Children's Psychiatric Center

Theodore Blunt
Director, Special Services, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Representative Gerald Buckworth
Co-Chairperson, House Human Resources Committee

Ann Case
Executive Director, Delaware School Boards Association

Sidney B. Collison
Assistant State Superintendent, Instructional Services Branch, Department of Public Instruction

Velma Evans
Professor of Education, Delaware State College

Representative Tina Fallon
Chairperson, House Education Committee

Helen Foss
Special Assistant to the Governor for Education

Mary Anne Galloway
President, Delaware State Education Association

Carl M. Haltom, Ed.D.
State Director, Exceptional Children/Special Programs Division, Department of Public Instruction

Jacqueline Harling
Kindergarten Teacher, Capital School District

(MEMBERS) continued

Nancy Hawpe
First Grade Teacher, Milford School District
Linda Hudson
Reading Specialist, Indian River School District
Barbara Humphreys, Ed.D.
State Specialist, Exceptional Children Programs
Representative Katharine M. Jester
Member, House Education Committee
Leslie Johnson
Director, Wilmington Headstart, Inc.
Roslyn S. Kusheloff
Retired Kindergarten Teacher, RCCSD and presently Educational Coordinator at Rockford Center
Representative Jane Maroney
Co-Chairperson, House Human Resources, Children and Aging Committee
Patricia T. Nelson, Ed.D.
Family and Child Development Specialist, Cooperative Extension, University of Delaware
Lyman Olsen
Director, Division of Public Health
Sally Ann Orr
Principal, Smyrna Kindergarten Center, Smyrna School District
Joseph Parlett
Executive Director, Delaware Association of School Administrators
Donald Peters, Ph.D.
Professor and Chairperson, Individual and Family Studies, University of Delaware
Meredith Roberts
Principal, Wilmington Manor Elementary School, Colonial School District
Nancy Schoedler
Director, Developmental Preschool, Inc.
Donna Gaver Shank, Ed.D.
Early Childhood Consultant
Doris Stevenson
1986 Teacher of the Year, Brandywood Elementary School, Brandywine School District
Carol Vukelich, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Inservice Education, University of Delaware and Associate Professor in the College of Education
Margie Wade
Professional Counselor, Elementary School Guidance
Kathi Way
Acting Director, Office of State Planning and Coordination
James Wilson, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Cape Henlopen School District
Deborah Ziegler
Program Director, Delaware Early Childhood Diagnostic and Intervention Center

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface		i
The Committee's Position Statement on Quality Early Childhood Programs		iii
Side Effects of the Process: Improved Communication and Cooperation		iv
Part I	- Focus on the First Sixty Months	1
Part II	- Focus on Child Care	3
Part III	- Focus on Four-Year-Old Programs	7
Part IV	- Focus on a Curriculum for Four-Year-Olds	10
Part V	- Focus on Admission Age for Kindergarten	11
Part VI	- Summary of the Recommendations Including Estimated Costs	13
Part VIII	- Focus on the Future	22

PREFACE

THE WORK OF THE GOVERNOR'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

THE COMMITTEE'S MISSION

The Governor's Early Childhood Education Study Committee was established in July, 1986 by the State Department of Public Instruction in response to a request from the Governor to the State Superintendent. The appointed Committee was to address the following issues:

- the implementation of the pilot four-year-old education program
- the transition and coordination between preschool, kindergarten and first grade programs
- a curriculum and content of preschool learning

Composed of 35 members, the Committee included representatives from a broad range of service providers, educators, professional organizations, members of the General Assembly, private child care centers and community organizations. The Committee was chaired by a state department staff member who had access to the expertise and resources available through the Department of Public Instruction. These individuals contributed to the work of the Committee by providing input during general Committee meetings and by participation on subcommittees.

FIVE SUBCOMMITTEES

The major part of the work of the Governor's Committee was carried out by five subcommittees, each of which focused on one of the following areas:

- The First Sixty Months
- Child Care
- The Four-Year-Old Pilot Programs
- A Curriculum for Four-Year-Olds
- Admission Age for Kindergarten

These subcommittees, each chaired by a member of the Governor's Committee, included members of the Committee as well as others who had expertise to offer on various early childhood topics. The subcommittee chairpersons, together with State Department staff developed the report set forth here.

The findings and recommendations detailed in this report are the result of hundreds of hours of deliberations on the part of the subcommittees and the

full Governor's Committee. Every recommendation incorporates the suggestions of the people on the front line - those who administer and provide services for children and families and who will ultimately be responsible for implementing the recommendations.

Finalized through formal review and vote by the full Governor's Committee, these recommendations represent the Committee's decisions regarding specific actions necessary to improve the quality of services for Delaware's children.

THE COMMITTEE'S POSITION STATEMENT ON QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The Committee believes that unless program quality is carefully defined and maintained, an early childhood program is just another place for a child to be. There is no intrinsic value in a young child leaving home to join another adult and another group of children. Fortunately, the Committee found a strong consensus among professional leaders in Delaware, national organizations, and local program providers on the components of quality. This consensus is based on an impressive body of both laboratory and clinical classroom research and theory which has documented the long term impact and benefits of quality programs on young children and their families. It reflects an understanding about how preschool children develop and how they learn.

In general quality programs recognize that each child is a whole person whose growth occurs in developmental stages that are sequential and continuous. Children learn by doing and they learn best when there are planned, age-appropriate curricula; qualified and nurturing staff; a warm, stimulating and positive environment; open and cooperative relationships between home, school and the community; opportunities for parent participation in the program; and a continuing evaluation system for children, personnel, and the overall program.

More specifically, the Committee believes the following principals of curriculum and pedagogy should apply to all programs, regardless of their size, source of funding or sponsorship:

1. The curriculum encourages children to be actively involved in the learning process, to experience a variety of developmentally appropriate activities, and to pursue their own interests.

2. Children work individually or in small informal groups. Concrete learning activities, rather than workbooks and ditto sheets, dominate the curriculum. Materials are changed regularly and show a developmental progression.

3. Teachers arrange the environment for children's active exploration. The curriculum and teacher interaction must be responsive to individual differences in ability and interest.

4. Children have frequent opportunities to develop large and small muscle coordination, language and literacy skills, aesthetic expression and appreciation, and concepts about themselves and the world through observation, social interaction, and problem-solving.

SIDE EFFECTS OF THE PROCESS: IMPROVED COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

While the primary purpose of the Governor's Committee was to develop specific recommendations, bringing diverse groups of people together to participate in the process has had positive side effects which enhance the quality of services for children in Delaware. Those effects which stem from the working relationships that developed during the process include:

- increased knowledge of the needs of children in Delaware.
- increased knowledge of programs for children in Delaware.
- improved communication among groups interested in early childhood education which applies to matters beyond the work of the Governor's Committee.
- improved communication and cooperation among public and private agencies so that they have a better understanding of each other's programs and a basis for coordination.

Most significantly, those who participated in the process left aside individual concerns to focus on the needs of Delaware's children from a broad and neutral perspective. Thus, the Governor's Committee has been able to develop its recommendations from a framework based upon the best interests of the children of our State.

PART I
FOCUS ON THE FIRST SIXTY MONTHS

Subcommittee

Kathi Way, Chairperson
Jean Allen
Anita Amurao
Ann Case
Joseph Parlett

FOCUS ON THE FIRST SIXTY MONTHS

FINDINGS

To a large degree the Focus on the First Sixty Months program transcends the issues dealt with by the other subcommittees. This program is responsible for the public awareness and understanding which are vital to the success of all the recommendations included in the report.

While some programs in Delaware have dealt with young children in terms of their education needs, health needs, and parent education, there has not been a program that deals with the general needs of a young child using an integrated approach. Recognizing this situation, the Governor proposed that a program be developed to increase the public's understanding of the importance of early childhood and the need to prevent long-term difficulties through early identification and intervention. The Focus on the First Sixty Months has three basic components: education, health, and community and public awareness. The unique feature of the program is that it recognizes the need to look across program lines at the needs of the total child. The effective implementation of this program requires extensive parental education and awareness activities. The means to affect this level of parental involvement has been the focal point of this Subcommittee.

Research has shown that the success of early education programs is largely dependent on parental support and involvement. However, parental involvement is restricted due to the following circumstances:

- many programs are offered during the day when parents are working.
- evening programs are not well attended because the demands placed on parents to maintain daily responsibilities don't allow time.
- many of the parents most in need of information are not comfortable attending programs at schools or in other formal settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the Subcommittee for the Focus on the First Sixty Months presents the following recommendations:

A. An on-going awareness program is essential to the success of all the recommendations contained in this report. Therefore, this Subcommittee recommends that voluntary members from the Early Childhood Education Study Committee should join the Focus on the First Sixty Months Advisory Committee to develop and maintain a high level of community/parental awareness needed for successful implementation of these recommendations.

B. The findings indicate that the current processes have not been successful in increasing parental involvement, therefore, the Subcommittee met with community representatives and private sector representatives to develop recommendations to increase parental involvement. Recognizing that no one process will accomplish the needed increase in parent involvement the following examples of creative planning to increase support are recommended. While this list is not all inclusive it is sufficient to provide a beginning.

- The focus on the First Sixty Months Advisory Committee should develop a partnership with private industry that would support the implementation of parent education and awareness programs at the work site during lunch time.

- The focus on the First Sixty Months Advisory Committee should work to develop evening programs for parents. These programs should be designed to relieve parents of domestic constraints. A continuum of parent education programs such as learn-at-home ideas, newsletters, video cassettes, etc. should be included. Babysitting and transportation services should also be provided and the programs should be planned to meet the specific needs of parent groups. Parent meetings should be held in settings that are comfortable and centrally located.

PART II
FOCUS ON CHILD CARE

Subcommittee

Deborah Ziegler, Chairperson
Gerald Buckworth
*Marianne Espinoza
Velma Evans
*Vicki Hall
*Evonn Ingram
*Gail Lebo
*Lynn G. McIntosh
*Patricia Pratt
*Jane Richter
*Barbara L. Sheppard

* Non-subcommittee members involved for input.

FOCUS ON CHILD CARE

FINDINGS

A major factor relating to quality in child care is competence and stability of caregivers. In Delaware, there is no low cost, systematic, on-going training program readily available to child care workers. There is need for short term, practical training which addresses the daily issues which providers must face and helps them to improve their proficiency in working with children and families. Given the supply shortage and low incomes of caregivers, there is a problem with motivating providers to upgrade the quality of services. For this reason, the system must look for ways to build rewards into the training programs and to mandate at least certain minimal training requirements for caregivers.

Therefore, the Subcommittee for Child Care presents the following findings relating to quality:

A. Child Care Accreditation

The accreditation system of the National Association of the Education of Young Children is designed to meet two major goals:

- to help early childhood program personnel become involved in a process that will facilitate real and lasting improvements in the quality of the program serving young children.

- to evaluate the quality of the program for the purpose of accrediting those early childhood programs that function in accordance with the criteria for high quality programs.

B. Child Care Provider Training

Research on the quality of child care programs has been slow to emerge. Only recently have studies been conducted that attempt to measure the effects of various dimensions of the quality of the program on outcomes for children. From the few existing studies, at least one strong conclusion can be drawn: the most important determinant of the quality of the program is the adults with whom the child interacts on a regular basis. The most consistent finding from the research is that positive outcomes for children, both cognitive and affective, are related to the presence of caregivers with specialized training in early childhood education and child development.

It is clear from both national and local studies that the training of teachers/caregivers is critical for ensuring that child care is of high quality. In addition where the National Association for the Education of Young Children was not able to award accreditation, the lack of staff training was a major deficiency. The kinds of training that are most effective are based on:

- on-going training sessions.

- sound child development theories, as well as knowledge of health and safety.

- a comprehensive view that incorporates cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and nutritional needs of the child.

- information and support on how to work effectively with staff and parents.

C. Professionalism in Child Care

The degree of respect that a society places upon any career is directly related to the degree of professionalism within the designated field. Professionalism consists of three diverse components: education, experience and attitude.

Education is the foundation of professionalism in the field of early childhood, particularly for those in leadership positions. Formal training in the theories of growth, development and socialization is essential for the full understanding of the young child.

Experience is the framework of professionalism. The ability to test one's formal knowledge and develop a personal style through a variety of work experiences is the value of experience.

Attitude is essential to professionalism. It is the most visible and intrinsic part of positive interactions, communications between director and staff, staff and parents, and staff and children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the Subcommittee for Child Care presents the following recommendations:

A. Child Care Accreditation

1. In recognition that the National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation currently represents the optimum standard of quality for children in child care programs, the Subcommittee recommends that Delaware take the following steps to encourage existing programs to obtain this accreditation:

   - establish a fund to assist existing child care programs with costs associated with the accreditation process.

   - offer incentives to business and industry for contribution to child care programs striving to achieve National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation.

B. Child Care Provider Training

1. In recognition that the Child Development Associate Credential represents the optimum standard of quality for training of child care providers , the Subcommittee recommends that Delaware take the following steps to encourage existing child care providers to obtain this credential. In the development of both local and state training programs the following alternatives are recommended for implementation:

- provide scholarships for the education and training of new child care providers in return for their commitment to stay in the field of child care for an agreed-upon number of years.
- provide on-the-job training scholarships through the Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program.
- fund the use of cable television shows, videocassettes, audio-cassettes, and training manuals.
- develop a teleconferencing training system, including an 800 telephone number for on-going information.
- support training efforts by local groups such as resource and referral agencies, family day care networks, child care councils, the Department of Public Instruction, community colleges, colleges, universities, and health agencies.

C. Child Care Professionalism

1. Professionalism can best be exhibited and promoted through an independent statewide advocacy group comprised of individuals from public, private and non-profit segments of the early childhood profession. Members of this advocacy group would represent the ideological and persistent character necessary for the attainment of common goals. The purpose of the advocacy group would be to:

- conduct research.
- monitor quality initiatives.
- influence public policy.
- enhance the professional image of child care.
- stimulate greater support from the business community.
- support those involved in all phases of child care, e.g., caregivers, preschool teachers, directors, and regulators.
- stimulate public education and awareness.

2. Professionalism should be promoted through a variety of tangible and intangible incentives for child care providers.

3. The image of child care should be strengthened through public education, consumer education, and education provided by business and industry.

PART III
FOCUS ON FOUR-YEAR-OLD PROGRAMS

Subcommittee

Donald Peters, Chairperson
Theodore Blunt
Tina Fallon
Carl Haltom
Leslie Johnson
Roslyn Kusheloff
Jane Maroney
Pat Nelson
Donna Shank

FOCUS ON FOUR-YEAR-OLD PROGRAMS

FINDINGS

This report represents the first of two that the Subcommittee for the Four-Year-Old Pilot Programs intends to provide. In this report a preliminary program description and a set of preliminary recommendations are presented. By July 1, 1987, a more comprehensive report that will include additional observational data, pre and post teacher ratings of the children's school adjustment, and parent reports of satisfaction will be completed. Meanwhile, present findings are as follows:

1. Each of the pilot programs has provided a rationale, a set of goals and specific objectives in their proposal.

2. A total of 99 children were enrolled in the three pilot programs.

3. Data suggest that the families enrolled in the pilot program are appropriately representative of families in the state based upon occupation and educational level.

4. Observational data recorded during the visits to the three sites suggest that there is considerable variation both within and across pilot programs on curriculum, teacher/child interactions, and the quality of the learning environment. For example:

   - the programs differ considerably on the adequacy of the physical space (both indoor and outdoor) available.

   - the teachers vary considerably on how much they verbally direct children.

   - across the three programs, the teachers differ in the way they state requests and directions to children, with some being less positive than others.

   - although teachers and their aides seem to be jointly aware of the plans and schedules for the daily activities, there is inconsistency in the ways in which they interact with children in their classroom.

5. While children were in the classroom, common health and safety measures were followed.

6. Conversations with teachers and administrators revealed concerns about the safety of the transportation of the children.

7. During some observations, parents were observed participating in the program and carrying out teacher assigned tasks with the children.

8. Curricula across the three programs vary in their focus on developmentally appropriate activities.

9. Within the classrooms there appears to be sufficient staff to promote the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the children.

10. Resources provided for the initiation of this program have fallen short of what would be desirable. Examples are as follows:

    - inadequate planning and funding for substitute teachers could undermine program effectiveness.
    - the lack of long range financial stability for the program makes it impossible to predict that the programs would have a stable, continuously improving, experienced staff for the future.
    - staffing for recruitment, record keeping, public relations, dealing with visitors and the like is inadequate.
    - no funding from outside the districts was provided for the purchase of age-appropriate supplies, materials or equipment.

11. Each of the programs has in place its own internal evaluation.

12. All of the programs have been open to visitors and have received varying levels of media coverage for their efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the Subcommittee for the Four-Year-Old Pilot Programs presents the following recommendations:

A. The Department of Public Instruction should establish guidelines for developmentally appropriate programming for four-year-olds in the public schools.

B. Efforts should be made, and funding should be provided, for joint inservice training and technical assistance to permit the sharing of ideas and expertise and to reduce the isolation of the programs.

C. The three programs should be continued at their current service levels (i.e. at 33 children each).

D. The funding for the three existing programs should be increased to include funds for: (a) the purchase of age appropriate materials, equipment and supplies; (b) to compensate for a much increased clerical/secretarial burden placed upon the host school; (c) to cover the above average costs of transportation; (d) to provide for substitutes; (e) and to cover costs of program evaluation.

E. Funding for these programs should be appropriately extended to permit adequate program development, insure personnel continuity and to avoid public criticism.

FOCUS ON FOUR-YEAR-OLD PROGRAMS

F. Future plans should consider:

1. that no additional expansion to new programs occur during the coming year, rather additional funds should be used for existing program improvement.

2. that any expansion in the near future occur within the three pilot districts, thereby relieving them of the pressures created by the large "waiting lists".

PART IV
FOCUS ON A CURRICULUM FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Subcommittee

Jacqueline Harling, Chairperson
Nancy Hawpe
Linda Hudson
Nancy Schoedler
Margie Wade

FOCUS ON A CURRICULUM FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

FINDINGS

Today's four-year-old has probably been exposed to at least one year of day care or nursery school. Consequently, if educators are to understand the developmental needs of young children, they must be aware of this and other factors such as family mobility, divorce rates and changing values. Attention must be given to the nurturing of the whole child in ways that neutralize the pressure and stress of daily living. A strong support base from both home and school is important to the developing self-concept of the four-year-old.

Many well designed programs provide excellent resources for fostering the development of four-year-olds. However, as public school policy makers decide to make provision for pre-kindergarten education, priority must be given to the development and implementation of programs which:

- are based on the current interpretation of child development research.
- employ only professionally trained personnel.
- focus on the specific needs and characteristics of four-year-old children and their families.

To ensure that public school early childhood programs are appropriately designed for the young children they serve, state departments of education must set high standards, establish regulations, implement guidelines, offer curriculum direction, and provide continuous opportunities for staff development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the Subcommittee for a Curriculum for Four-Year-Olds presents the following recommendations:

A. State Guidelines be established which include:

- a philosophy regarding the value of play: play being the four-year-old's developmental learning style.
- a humanistic climate that fosters a positive self-concept.
- a developmental process whereby the knowledge and understanding of concepts and symbols comes through concrete play-oriented experiences.
- tasks that address individual abilities and interests of children.

B. A position statement (pamphlet style), which will inform the general public of current research and quality programs for early childhood education be published and disseminated.

PART V
FOCUS ON ADMISSION AGE FOR KINDERGARTEN

Subcommittee

Carol Vukelich, Chairperson
*Jeanne Benin
Barbara Humphreys
Katharine Jester
Sally Ann Orr
Meredith Roberts
Doris Stevenson
James Wilson

*Non-subcommittee member involved for input.

FOCUS ON ADMISSION AGE FOR KINDERGARTEN

FINDINGS

In Delaware, children who fail to experience success in the early grades are often those born between September 1 and January 1* (the date by which a child must be five in order to enter school). Reportedly many of these late birthday children or "younger children" arrive at school lacking the maturity needed to successfully complete kindergarten and/or first grade academic requirements. Consequently, many of these children are retained. These findings are supported by current research on kindergarten entrance age and by pertinent data collected from Delaware teachers and administrators pertaining to retentions in kindergarten and first grade for 1985-86 and 1984-85.

1. A review of the literature indicates that when compared to older children, younger children:

   - tend to receive many more below-average grades from teachers.
   - are much more likely to score in the below-average range on standardized achievement tests.
   - are far more likely to have failed at least one grade.
   - are far more likely to have been referred by teachers for learning disabilities testing and subsequently to have been diagnosed as being learning disabled.
   - are more likely to have academic problems that often last throughout their school careers and sometimes even into adulthood.

2. Data collected from the surveyed teachers and administrators indicated the following in order of priority:

   - one way of meeting the needs of younger children is to change the admission to school date from January 1 to September 1.
   - there is strong support for a maximum class size of 15 children in primary grades or grade 1 and 15 children in kindergarten.
   - there is strong support for state funding to provide for pre-first or developmental pre-first units.
   - Relative to other proposed items, State funding for pre-kindergarten programs for four-year-olds received less support from teachers or principals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings the Subcommittee for Admission Age for Kindergarten presents the following recommendations:

FOCUS ON ADMISSION AGE FOR KINDERGARTEN

A. Over a two year period beginning in the 1988-89 academic year the admission to school date should be changed from January 1 to "prior to September 1." During the first year of implementation, children who turn five prior to November 1 would be eligible for admission to kindergarten. During the second year, children who turn five prior to September 1 would be eligible for admission to kindergarten.

   This change would provide some, but not all young children with time needed to mature. In addition, a developmentally appropriate curriculum rather than an increased number of academic tasks must be emphasized. Curriculum planning should incorporate activities that are based on each child's special interests and developmental progress. Concern regarding performance on standardized testing in first grade, i.e., CTBS, does not coincide with research-based factors that influence a quality developmental kindergarten program.

B. Over a two-year period beginning in the 1988-89 academic year the funding unit for kindergarten be reduced from 40 to 36.

C. The state provide funding for developmental pre-first programs. Children assigned to these programs should not be included in retention numbers.

SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

INCLUDING ESTIMATED COSTS

SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDING ESTIMATED COSTS

I. FOCUS ON THE FIRST SIXTY MONTHS

Recommendations

A. An on-going awareness program is essential to the success of all the recommendations contained in this report. Therefore, this Subcommittee recommends that voluntary members from the Early Childhood Education Study Committee should join the Focus on the First Sixty Months Advisory Committee to develop and maintain a high level of community/parental awareness needed for successful implementation of these recommendations.

Cost Assumed by the Focus on the First Sixty Months Advisory Committee

B. The findings indicate that the current processes have not been successful in increasing parental involvement, therefore, the Subcommittee met with community representatives and private sector representatives to develop recommendations to increase parental involvement. Recognizing that no one process will accomplish the needed increase in parent involvement. The following examples of creative planning to increase support are recommended. While this list is not all inclusive it is sufficient to provide a beginning.

- The focus on the First Sixty Months Advisory Committee should develop a partnership with private industry that would support the implementation of parent education and awareness programs at the work site during lunch time.

  Cost Assumed by Private Industry

- The focus on the First Sixty Months Advisory Committee should work to develop evening programs for parents. These programs should be designed to relieve parents of domestic constraints. A continuum of parent education programs such as learn-at-home ideas, newsletters, video cassettes, etc. should be included. Babysitting and transportation services should also be provided and the programs should be planned to meet the specific needs of parent groups. Parent meetings should be held in settings that are comfortable and centrally located.

  ESTIMATED COST: To support programs for parent education including babysitting, transportation services, and comfortable and centrally located meeting places, the estimated cost would be $2,000.00 per month or an annual cost of $24,000.00. This cost could increase as the program grows. This cost is based on the cost of similar programs currently operating.

II. FOCUS ON CHILD CARE

Recommendations

A. Child Care Accreditation

1. In recognition that the National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation currently represents the optimum standard of quality for children in child care programs, it is recommended that Delaware take the following steps to encourage existing programs to obtain this accreditation:

- establish a fund to assist existing child care programs with costs associated with the accreditation process.

- offer incentives to business and industry for contribution to child care programs striving to achieve National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation.

ESTIMATED COST: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation is offered under four levels according to size of child population. Costs include an application fee and a validation fee. Estimated yearly costs according to this format are as follows:

Enrollment	Application Fee	Validation Fee	Estimated # of Groups	Total Estimated Cost
Level 1 (fewer than 60)	$ 50	$200	5	$ 1,250.00
Level 2 (61 to 120)	$100	$350	10	$ 4,500.00
Level 3 (121 to 240)	$150	$450	10	$ 6,000.00
Level 4 (over 240)	$200	$550	5	$ 3,750.00
	Grand Total for Accreditation			$15,500.00

B. Child Care Provider Training

1. In recognition that the Child Development Associate Credential represents the optimum standard of quality for training of child care providers, it is recommended that Delaware take the following steps to encourage existing child care providers to obtain this credential. In the development of both local and state training programs the following alternatives are recommended for implementation:

- provide scholarships for the education and training of new child care providers in return for their commitment to stay in the field of child care for an agreed-upon number of years.

- provide on-the-job training scholarships through the Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program.

- fund the use of cable television shows, videocassettes, audio-cassettes, and training manuals.

- develop a teleconferencing training system, including an 800 telephone number for on-going information.

- support training efforts by local groups such as resource and referral agencies, family day care networks, child care councils, the Department of Public Instruction, community colleges, colleges of education, and health agencies.

ESTIMATED COST:

To implement an annual training program for child care providers including trainer fees, materials, equipment, and facilitators would cost approximately $100,000.

Individual scholarships for training child care providers based on 30 college credits at $45.00 per credit would cost $1,350 per individual. The recommended number of annual scholarships to be awarded is 20. Therefore the total cost of individual scholarships would be $ 27,000.

To provide on-the-job training scholarships through the Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program, the cost is $325 per child care provider. The recommended number of annual on-the-job scholarships to be awarded is 30. Therefore, the total cost of on-the-job scholarships through the Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program would be $9,750.

Advisors will be necessary to implement the training and credentialing of the CDA program at an annual cost of $60,000 for their services.

The cost of funding the use of cable television shows, videocassettes, audio-cassettes, and training manuals would be absorbed under the $100,000 estimated cost for an annual training program mentioned earlier.

The cost of developing a teleconferencing training system, including an 800 telephone number for on-going information would also be absorbed under the annual training program cost.

C. Child Care Professionalism

1. Professionalism can best be exhibited and promoted through an independent statewide advocacy group comprised of individuals from public, private and non-profit segments of the early childhood profession. Members of this advocacy group would represent the ideological and persistent character necessary for the attainment of common goals. The purpose of the advocacy group would be to:

- conduct research.
- monitor quality initiatives.
- influence public policy.
- enhance the professional image of child care.
- stimulate greater support from the business community.
- support those involved in all phases of child care, e.g., caregivers, preschool teachers, directors, and regulators.
- stimulate public education and awareness.

2. Professionalism should be promoted through a variety of tangible and intangible incentives for child care providers.

3. The image of child care should be strengthened through public education, consumer education, and education provided by business and industry.

NO COST PROPOSED

The grand total for all costs under the area of Focus on Child Care is $212,250.

III. FOCUS ON FOUR-YEAR-OLD PROGRAMS

Recommentations

A. The Department of Public Instruction should establish guidelines for developmentally appropriate programming for four-year-olds in the public schools.

B. Efforts should be made, and funding should be provided for, joint inservice training and technical assistance to permit the sharing of ideas and expertise and to reduce the isolation of the programs.

C. The three programs should be continued at their current service levels (i.e. at 33 children each).

D. The funding for the three existing programs should be increased to include funds for: (a) the purchase of age appropriate materials, equipment and supplies; (b) to compensate for a much increased clerical/secretarial burden placed upon the host school; (c) to cover the above average costs of transportation; (d) to provide for substitutes; (e) and to cover costs of program evaluation.

E. Funding for these programs should be appropriately extended to permit adequate program development, insure personnel continuity and to avoid public criticism.

F. Future plans should consider:

1. that no additional expansion to new programs occur during the coming year, rather additional funds should be used for existing program improvement.

2. that any expansion in the near future occur within the three pilot districts, thereby relieving them of the pressures created by the large "waiting lists".

ESTIMATED COST:

To project the cost of the four-year-old program at the level being recommended by the Subcommittee, the State's unit funding system must be considered. School appropriation fall under three divisions. Division I includes appropriations designated for the purpose of paying the employees of the various school districts; Division II includes appropriations for all other school costs, except those for debt service and the transportation of pupils; Division III includes appropriations for educational advancement (equalization).

Using this system, and following an approach similar to the one used to fund kindergarten, the cost of a four-year-old program unit would be as follows:

Division I	
Teacher	$27,165.00
Aide	14,072.00
	$41,237.00
Division II	$ 3,568.00
Division III	$ 3,880.00
Total	$48,685.00

Based on the cost to annually transport one child to kindergarten ($434.00), the transportation cost for a group of thirty three children (maximum number of children now being served by a single pilot program) would be $14,322.

Therefore, the total cost of a four-year-old program unit plus transportation would be $63,007 which represents approximately 67% of the estimated cost of actual operation. The total cost of a four-year-old unit that would address all of the components mentioned in recommendations B, D and E would represent 100% of the estimated cost and would come to the amount of $94,040 per group of 33 children. Three such units would total $282,120.

IV. FOCUS ON A CURRICULUM FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Recommendations:

A. State Guidelines be established which include:

- a philosophy regarding the value of play: play being the four-year-old's developmental learning style.
- a humanistic climate that fosters a positive self-concept.
- a developmental process whereby the knowledge and understanding of concepts and symbols comes through concrete play-oriented experiences.
- tasks that address individual abilities and interests of children.

B. A position statement (pamphlet style) which will inform the general public of current research and quality programs for early childhood education be published and disseminated.

ESTIMATED COST:

To develop State Curriculum Guidelines for four-year-olds, costs would have to address the development of the guidelines by a small group of curriculum developers with early childhood expertise; the cost of printing the guidelines; and the cost of training teachers and aides to accurately interpret and use the guidelines.

Except for training, similar costs would apply to the development of a pamphlet style position statement for informing the general public.

Estimated cost, based on the experience of developing State Guidelines for Kindergarten are as follows:

State Guidelines	
Development Cost	$5,700.00
Printing Cost (500 copies)	1,300.00
Training Cost	1,000.00
Total	$7,100.00
Pamphlet Style Position Statement	
Development Cost	$ 2,800.00
Printing Cost (3,000 copies)	900.00
Total	3,700.00
Grand Total	$10,800.00

V. FOCUS ON ADMISSION AGE FOR KINDERGARTEN

Recommendations:

A. Over a two year period beginning in the 1988-89 academic year the admission to school date should be changed from January 1 to "prior to September 1." During the first year of implementation, children who turn five prior to November 1 would be eligible for admission to kindergarten. During the second year, children who turn five prior to September 1 would be eligible for admission to kindergarten.

   This change would provide some, but not all young children with time needed to mature. In addition, a developmentally appropriate curriculum rather than an increased number of academic tasks must be emphasized. Curriculum planning should incorporate activities that are based on each child's special interests and developmental progress. Concern regarding performance on standardized testing in first grade, i.e., CTBS, does not coincide with research-based factors that influence a quality developmental kindergarten program.

B. Over a two-year period beginning in the 1988-89 academic year the funding unit for kindergarten be reduced from 40 to 36.

C. The state provide funding for developmental pre-first programs. Children assigned to these programs not be included in retention numbers.

ESTIMATED COSTS:

If over a two-year transitional period the admission to school age for kindergarten children was changed to say that they must be five years old prior to September 1 of the calendar year in which they are born and over the same two-year period there was a reduction in the funding unit from 40 to 36, the implications would be as follows:

In the first year of transition and using current projected enrollments, there would be a decline in kindergarten units by twenty two (22). This would result in a reduction in the kindergarten pupil population by 16 2/3%. In this first year, the reduction in the funding unit would not have a noticeable effect.

In the second year of transition, the number of kindergarten units although still less than before transition, would begin to increase by approximately eight (8). The reduction of the kindergarten funding unit would begin to take effect and the size of the pupil population would remain constant. The admission of the students delayed during the first year of transition would compensate for the reduction in student population during the second year.

In the third year, or the first year in which a settling effect occurs, the number of kindergarten units would increase again by approximately thirty three (33). With transition complete, the kindergarten population will have returned to or beyond its original size and the reduction in the funding

unit from 40 to 36 will have taken full effect. (For further explanation, see Table below.)

TABLE SHOWING THE APPROXIMATE REDUCTIONS AND INCREASES IN UNIT SIZE, NUMBER OF UNITS AND PUPIL POPULATION FROM 1987-88 to 1990-91.

	Unit Size	Age	Units	Pupil Population
1987-88	40	Jan. 1	179	7,143
1988-89	38	Nov. 1	157	5,953
1989-90	36	Sept. 1	165	5,953
1990-91	36	Sept. 1	198	7,143

The estimated cost of a funding unit the first year, 1988-89, would be $36,344. Therefore, a reduction of twenty two (22) units would amount to $797,568.00 less in unit funding.

The estimated cost of a funding unit the second year, 1989-90, would be $38,161. An increase of eight (8) units would amount to $305,288.00. However, this is $492,280.00 less than before transition.

The estimated cost of a funding unit the third year, 1990-91, would be $40,069. Therefore, an increase of thirty three (33) units would amount to approximately $1,322,277.00.

Over a period of three years, 1988-1991, there would be an overall increase of nineteen funding units at an approximate cost of $40,069 per unit for a total of $761,311.00 more than before transition.

SUMMARY OF OVERALL COSTS FOR ALL SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus on the First Sixty Months	$ 24,000.00
Focus on Child Care	$ 212,250.00
Focus on Four-Year-Old Programs	$ 282,120.00
Focus on Curriculum for Four-Year-Olds	$ 10,800.00
Focus on Admission Age for Kindergarten (over a three-year period)	$ 761,311.00
Grand Total for All Recommendations	$ 1,290,481.00

Focus on the Future

The Committee found that a variety of public and private sponsors are involved in providing care and education to Delaware's preschool children and their parents. For example, Project Head Start serves approximately 820 low income three- and four-year olds, with federal funding of roughly $2 million. The Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families has licensed 148 child care centers which enroll 8,000 children, and 734 day care homes which serve an additional 3,000 children. Preschool students with special needs, which number approximately 275, are served through the public schools, and 100 children are involved in the pilot program for four-year-olds in the public schools.

Many states have increased their investment in early childhood programs, ranging from parent education initiatives, to expanded child care services, to part-day programs in the public schools. Since 1984, the number of states sponsoring preschool initiatives has increased from eight to twenty-three, and state funding has more than doubled - from roughly $160 million to nearly one-third of a billion dollars.

Clearly there are unmet needs in Delaware's current set of arrangements. Head Start enrolls only about 20% of the low income children in the state each year; child care centers have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified staff due to low salaries; and there are needs for improvement of outreach to youngsters with special needs. However, in the Committee's view, the key priority for state action at present is to improve the quality of existing services rather than to initiate a major expansion of publicly-supported programs.

The Committee encourages a flexible approach to serving preschool students which will ensure the active participation of many providers and will support multiple types of services in the public and private sectors. Not all families want or need the same services for their young children. Recognizing this diversity, the Committee strongly advocates the preservation of options so that parents may choose the services that best meet their needs at a given point in time. The state can take a leadership role in informing the public about these services and in helping to enhance their quality. It is recommended that the state take leadership in establishing and funding state-level mechanisms that will:

- Coordinate existing and new services and programs, ensuring that they are offered equitably, and at parental option;

- Provide training and technical assistance to help programs to implement developmentally appropriate services, with a focus on the critical role parents play in the early years;

- Establish a single state-wide data base on the status of young children and their families and available services;

- Support the provision of information to parents at the community level on the availability of services;

- Review standards and monitoring procedures for programs supported by different state agencies to promote consistency and high quality services; and

- Examine existing and innovative credentialing systems for personnel service young children, with the goal of developing equitable credentialing alternative.

To oversee the implementation of these recommendations, it is suggested that an early childhood work group representing appropriate state agencies and a range of local program sponsors be established.

NJM/kdh
7/22/87
0094m